

What God's Grace is Not, Part 1 - Romans 6:1-2 – January 1st, 2012

- The Apostle Paul, here in Romans chapter six, rounds a corner and starts getting into the nuts and bolts of how God's grace works in our lives.
- In other words, Paul is now going to, sort of, fill in the blanks connecting the dots of grace, and in so doing show us what grace really looks like.
- In order to do that he will actually begin by describing, by the Holy Spirit, what grace does not look like, or perhaps better said, what grace is not.

- It's important to understand the "method behind the madness," if you will, of how this Epistle is written, and more importantly, why it was written.
- First, as it relates to the "how" of the Epistle, the Holy Spirit has Paul introduce a truth, so as to wet their appetite, for when he comes back to it.
- Second, as it relates to the "why" of the Epistle, the Holy Spirit has the Apostle answer questions that would arise concerning the grace of God.

- There's a third component in addition to the how and why of the Epistle, and it has to do with the where of the Epistle. I'm not speaking of Rome.
- What I mean by that is; though the recipients of this Epistle are in Rome geographically, they will also be back in court as well, metaphorically.
- From the start of the Epistle, Paul took the posture of an attorney arguing his case in the courtroom of eternity before the Judge of the universe.

Jon Courson in his commentary said it best this way; "...we have arrived at one of the most powerful and potent passages ever penned by the apostle Paul. As a lawyer, Paul masterfully and persuasively made his point in the first five chapters that salvation is apart from works. But this causes problems for people who say, "If you preach grace, people will live loosely unless you lay down the law, and tell them what to do and how to think." In chapter 6, Paul will address that issue as he presents his argument to those who insist that grace leads to loose living."

- It's for this reason that Paul will now hit, "head-on," this issue of grace leading to loose living, as he expounds on what he wrote in chapter 5:20.

Romans 5:20 NIV The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more,

Of this, one commentator aptly wrote that; "Paul has said something that must seem perverse to morally serious people. He has said that knowing God's commands just makes sin worse, as sinful people knowingly disobey him; and yet, even though sin goes on increasing, 'grace increased all the more,' to bring eternal life to all sorts of guilty people. Morally serious people, [like], (the Jewish Christians in Rome) knowing that sin is sin, and we ought not to do it. They understand that any religion worth its salt ought to make bad people good, or at least less bad. It seems to them that Paul is in danger of preaching an immoral religion that encourages bad people to go on being just as bad."

- This is why, I've chosen to title this new series; "What God's Grace is Not." Today will be part one, and in verse one, we will see our first one.

1. It's not a license to sin (Verse 1)

(1) What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?

- v1 The Apostle Paul asks the question of whether or not we can continue living in habitual sin in order that grace may increase proportionately.
- Right out of the shoot, we have a problem by virtue of how we're prone to think, in the natural, that this is the logical conclusion of the matter.
- It stands to reason, if grace increases the more that sin increases, then let's just keep on sinning even more, because more grace is a coming.

Charles Spurgeon – "Because salvation is all of grace shall we plunge into yet more sin? Some of the children of darkness have been vile enough to reason thus: shall the believer adopt the same base argument?"

- Sadly, many a professing believer adopts this argument as evidenced by thinking the more sin I'm guilty of, the more grace I'm the recipient of.
- This argument is taken further when it gives way to the belief that it doesn't matter what I do, because at the end of the day God will forgive me.
- Have you ever wondered why some people who say they are Christians, seem to think that they can just go on sinning without any problem?

- By the way, it is perfectly normal to question the authenticity of somebody's Christianity, when they willfully continue on sinning, with impunity.
- That's not to say that this applies to the truly born again Christian who struggles with sin rather, this speaks of those who actually enjoy their sin.
- This will come in to a clearer focus, as we'll see next, so suffice it to say; "drinking from the cup of God's grace will ruin all of the fun of our sin."

- I'll say the same thing in a different way; "when I have tasted of the goodness and grace of God, nothing the world has to offer will ever satisfy."
- This explains how it is, and why it is, that grace cannot become a license to sin. It simply doesn't work that way. Actually the opposite is true.
- Instead of grace leading to sin increasing, it's grace leading to sin decreasing. This is what grace is and what grace is not. It's how grace works.

2. It's not conducive to sin (Verse 2)

(2) By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

- v2 Paul answers the question in verse one saying; "by no means shall we go on sinning that grace may increase because we are dead to sin.
- He then asks even another question, which he will expound upon commencing in verse three, by asking; "how can we live in sin any longer?"
- This question, by it's very nature, would suggest that to live in sin, even delight in sin, is not only an improbability, it's an impossibility as well.

William Newell – "This does not mean that all Christians have discovered, or walk in, the path of victory over sin; for in this second verse Paul is answering directly the bald bold insinuation of verse one—that grace abounding over sin warrants and enables one believing that doctrine to go right on in his old life! We know from other Scriptures the impossibility of this: "Whosoever is born of God doth not practice sin, because His [God's] seed abideth in him, and he is not able to practice sin, because he is begotten of God."

Charles Spurgeon – "We are new men and cannot delight in sin. Our nature has undergone a change, which has made the argument just mentioned most abhorrent to us. We are dead to sin, and have made an open declaration thereof... we should be base indeed if we lived to sin as we once did."

- I'll close with an illustration, by way of a personal application of this truth herein. Suppose that you are at a cemetery reading some headstones.
- After noting the dates of the deceased's birth and death, you happen upon a date of when the deceased will die, instead of when they did die.
- Not only would that be strange, it would imply that the individual was not dead, and could live longer, at least up until the date on the headstone.

- In this analogy the date of our death to sin on the headstone already passed which is why Paul says we died to sin and can't live in it any longer.
- This death is not a current state but a past act, or fact, if you prefer. We're already dead to sin thus it's impossible for us to live in sin any longer.
- In other words, the date has already come and gone so it's impossible for us to continue living as if it had not which explains why it is we cannot.